

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 11, 2005

**Governor Blagojevich Signs Renewal of Landmark Film
Legislation that is Bringing Major Productions Back to
Illinois and Creating Thousands of Jobs for State's
Economy**

CHICAGO – Expanding on the tremendous success of the Illinois film industry in 2004, Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich continued the revitalization of movie and television production in Illinois by extending the film tax incentive legislation today that has proven to be instrumental in bringing major film and television projects back to Illinois. Much of this success is due to the legislation that the Governor helped the General Assembly pass in 2003. Today, the Governor extended the film tax credits through 2006 by signing Senate Bill 1965 on the set of Universal Pictures The Break-Up, a romantic comedy currently filming in Chicago starring Vince Vaughn and Jennifer Aniston. Many other major motion pictures from a cross-section of Hollywood's studios featuring popular talent, including Sandra Bullock, Keanu Reeves, Dustin Hoffman, Will Ferrell and John Malkovich, are now filming or have filmed in the Chicagoland area in 2005. These projects are estimated to create 5,000 jobs and inject \$68 million into the state's economy. In all of 2004, projects filmed throughout the state created nearly 15,000 jobs and generated \$77 million, 200 percent higher than in 2003.

"The film tax credit legislation has propelled Illinois back into the bright lights, once again making our state one of the premier locations in the world for major productions. During the first full year this legislation was in effect, we saw film revenues soar by 200 percent and 2005 is shaping up to be an even better year. We've always had the locations, local talent and expertise to compete with any other location as a top-flight destination for motion picture and television production. Thanks to the leadership on both sides of the aisle, we are extending and improving this landmark legislation that has helped the film industry become a real force of growth for the Illinois economy," Gov. Blagojevich said.

Illinois' film industry was in deep decline up until nearly two years ago when the Governor signed Senate Bill 785, which made the state more competitive with other filming locations across the nation and around the world. The law provides a tax credit equal to 25 percent of the first \$25,000 in wages paid to Illinois residents working on television and film projects shot in Illinois. The Governor signed Senate Bill 1965 into law today, which was sponsored by State Senator Rickey Hendon (D-Chicago) and State Rep. Ken Dunkin (D-Chicago), extending the film tax credit

legislation for another year, with provisions making it easier to use and encouraging the hiring of Illinois workers from high unemployment areas.

"Gov. Blagojevich and I are so pleased to see this important industry prospering in Illinois. By partnering with Hollywood's finest studios, we are creating thousands of jobs and pumping millions of dollars into our economy," State Senator Hendon (D-Chicago) said.

"This is another strong indication that Illinois is once again attracting these incredibly diverse productions that are providing a critical economic boost. Gov. Blagojevich and I will continue working with the studios to make sure this year is an even better year than 2004," State Rep. Dunkin (D-Chicago) said.

"The film tax credit is a great incentive program which has helped to bring film production to the state of Illinois," said Vince Vaughn, producer and star of Universal Pictures The Break-Up. "This piece of legislation made it financially attractive for the production of The Break-Up to shoot entirely in my hometown of Chicago and will continue to entice future projects to the state. The city of Chicago and its surrounding communities have so much to offer filmmakers in terms of local talent, dedicated crews and a diversity of looks and topography. I want to thank Gov. Blagojevich, Mayor Daley and everyone involved who played a role in extending the tax credit for another year."

"By working together, we have proven that Illinois has everything it needs to bring all kinds of movie and television productions back to Chicago and across the state. I want to thank Gov. Blagojevich for his support in extending the tax credit, which has been vital to attracting location production here and to our studios' continued success," MPAA Executive Vice President of Industry Affairs Vans Stevenson said.

"With thousands of jobs and millions of dollars being pumped into our state's economy, this legislation has proven to be a tremendous boost for film and television production here in Illinois. Extending the tax credit was a true partnership, and this could not have happened without Gov. Blagojevich's strong leadership," Illinois Production Alliance President Eileen Willenborg said.

"We have brought this industry back to life here in Illinois by forming productive partnerships that are paying tremendous economic dividends that will certainly continue with the extension of the film tax credit. Gov. Blagojevich has been a great champion for film and television production across our state," The United Filmmakers Foundation Executive Director and Founder Lun Ye Marsh said.

“Gov. Blagojevich understands how important the film production industry is for the Illinois economy, and the thousands and thousands of hardworking and talented men and women who play integral roles in helping it thrive. The tax incentive legislation is a crucial tool in bringing productions like *The Break-Up* and other job opportunities to our local industry talent and, by renewing this legislation, we’re ensuring that those workers can continue to call Illinois home,” Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Director Jack Lavin said

“Illinois has such strong talent and we can keep them working, in front of the camera and behind the scenes, as the Illinois Film Office continues to foster relationships in Hollywood to rebuild the Illinois film industry. Thanks to Gov. Blagojevich’s support, we’ve come a long way, but we must continue to support the film industry to keep these studios coming back to Illinois,” said Brenda Sexton, Managing Director of the Illinois Film Office.

Movies and television currently filming or scheduled to film in Illinois includes:

Vince Vaughn and Jennifer Aniston star in Universal Pictures *The Break-Up*, an unconventional love story that begins where most romantic comedies end: after boy and girl have met, fallen for each other and moved into their newly purchased condo to start their happily-ever-after. But after two years, the initial bliss of living together has long faded and the couples personality quirks and lifestyles are driving each other crazy.

Illinois’ first television series in five years, *Prison Break*, is a FOX Television series that is being produced by Brett Ratner. Dominic Purcell plays a death row inmate who professes his innocence and his engineer brother, Wentworth Miller, gets placed in the prison to orchestrate a plan to help him escape. The series charts the prison break over the course of a season. Production has already begun at the Joliet Prison, with airing expected in late August. The *Prison Break* pilot was filmed in Illinois in December.

Warner Bros. Studio’s *Il Mare* is directed by Alejandro Agresti and produced by Doug Davison and Roy Lee. This romantic drama was filmed in and around Chicago and stars Keanu Reeves, Sandra Bullock, John Dylan Walsh, Shohreh Aghdashloo, Ebon Moss-Bachrach, Lynn Collins, Willeke van Ammelrooy and Christopher Plummer. Production started in mid-March and has now wrapped.

Mandate Pictures is filming *Stranger Than Fiction* with a full cast of talent, including Will Ferrell, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Dustin Hoffman, Queen Latifah and Emma Thompson. Ferrell plays an agent for the IRS who finds himself the subject of narration that only he can hear. The narration begins to deeply affect everything from his work to his love life. Chicago Theatre School at DePaul University alumnus Zach Helm wrote the script and Marc Forster is directing the film.

Magnificent Mile Productions, Ltd. producers Anthony and Joseph Tomaska and John Malkovich with co-production partner Paris Mudd began filming *Drunk Boat* in late May. The Tomaskas (producers of *TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING* and owners of the Chicago Center For The Performing Arts) and Malkovich (who also stars in the film with John Goodman) have several other projects planned to shoot in Chicago. Robert Meyer, a native of Morton Grove and alumnus of Southern Illinois University, is directing the film, which has finished shooting.

You Are Going to Prison, a comedy based on the book of the same name, is produced by Prison Pictures, LLC and directed by Bob Odenkirk. The movie was shot in the Joliet Prison and stars Will Arnett and Dax Shepard.